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Chairman Kasten and committee members,

My name is Karen Kaufmann. I am testifying on behalf of Grant #1223 for Headwaters Dance Company and their Montana Suite Project. Headwaters Dance Co. is the only company of its kind in Montana. They are a professional, modern dance, touring company. They both create dances and commission them from some of the best-known contemporary choreographers in the country and then tour them around the state, accompanied by a great variety of school and community residency activities.

The Montana Suite project is a multi-year project for which they are commissioning four dances about different areas of the state from nationally known choreographers. When complete it will be toured regionally, and they hope internationally, as a movement anthology, so to speak, meant to celebrate the landscapes and cultures of this rich and varied state. In this grant application they are asking for funding to help commission Parts III and IV of the project. Part III will be choreographed by Lar Lubovitch, who has most recently had commissions from America's foremost ballet company, American Ballet Theater in New York as well as in Musical Theater on Broadway. (He actually is originally a modern dance choreographer) so they are thrilled to have got someone of his caliber to work with them; but of course he's not cheap. He will be brought in to make a piece about the Rocky Mountain Front, focusing on both the majesty of the scenery and the history of the Old North Trail. They are still searching for an appropriate choreographer, both in caliber and sensitivity, for Part IV to be focused on the Native American presence in our state, ideally in the Crow Reservation area.

Past sections of the Suite have included the first based on the Boulder Batholith area, encompassing Butte, Boulder, Basin and Helena, which delved into our mining history. The second, just completed, explored the Hi-Line running from Browning to Wolf Point. The response to these past sections has been overwhelming especially from audiences in those specific areas. They were regaled with stories about what it's like to be down in the mines from former miners who'd seen Part I when they performed it in Butte. Obviously, it had struck a chord. After an informal showing of the Hi-Line piece one audience member was in tears saying she'd grown up on the Hi-Line and had always just wanted to leave; that this was the first time the area had seemed beautiful to her. Amy Ragsdale, Headwaters' director,

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says she has found herself learning through this process of watching these choreographers make dances about these areas infinitely more than she knew about them, even as a Montana resident.

In conclusion, they hope you will support this project as generously as you are able to. It offers a fresh and exciting way to see our state, both for residents and for non-residents, and is an avenue to opening up a dialogue about what we have here, that sometimes as residents, especially, we may have ceased to see.

Thank you.